

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4543

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BONN 5612

LIMDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR BRANDTBEFORE HIS VISIT TO
WASHINGTON

1. SUMMARY: HIS PERSONAL AUTHORITY REINFORCED BY THE RECENT SPD CONGRESS, CHANCELLOR BRANDT WILL BE COMING TO WASHINGTON AS UNDISPUTED LEADER OF HIS PARTY, AS HEAD OF A GOVERNMENT WITH AN EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY, AND AS ONE OF THE ACKNOWLEDGED STATESMEN OF EUROPE. YET HE IS PREY TO NAGGING WORRIES AND UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT THE FUTURE, AND I HAVE THOUGHT IT USEFUL TO TRY TO EVALUATE, AS FAR AS THIS IS POSSIBLE FROM PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE OBSERVATIONS OF OTHER COMPETENT SOURCES, HIS PRESENT STATE OF MIND AND THE GENERAL CONCERNS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO WEIGH MOST HEAVILY IN HIS THINKING AS HE PREPARES FOR HIS US VISIT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CHANCELLOR IS A COMPLICATED MAN WHO HAS PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER MOST OF THE GREAT TRAUMATIC EVENTS OF OUR TIME. HE HAS SHIFTED RIGHTWARDS FROM THE EXTREME LEFT OF THE POLITICAL
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SPECTRUM AS HE HAS GROWN IN EXPERIENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY, BUT HE REMAINS A MAN OF MANY MOODS AND COMPLEXES, SOME OF THEM UNDOUBTEDLY BURIED DEEP IN THE EXPERIENCE OF HIS PAST. HE HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO PERIODIC BOUTS OF WEARINESS WITH THE WHOLE POLITICAL ENTERPRISE. HE WENT THROUGH ONE OF THESE DURING THIS PAST WINTER (BONN 3589), FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL BUT EXHAUSTING ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF LAST FALL. BUT HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO RISE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF HIS PARTY DURING RECENT MONTHS AND SEEMS TO HAVE ACQUIRED A NEW ZEST FOR LEADERSHIP IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOGNIZED NEED TO TAKE A STRONG STAND AGAINST GROWING RADICAL LEFT TENDENCIES WITHIN THE SPD AS WELL AS TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF BEING AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN EAST- WEST DETENTE DEVELOPMENTS.

3. GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND AND PERSONAL HABITS, HE CONTINUES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE GOSSIP IN LOCAL OFFICIAL AND DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES, FREQUENTLY CENTERING ON HIS DRINKING HABITS AND ALLEGED DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS HANDSOME AND INTELLIGENT NORWEGIAN WIFE. THERE HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN SOME TRUTH TO THESE STORIES, BUT MANY TIMES IN THE PAST-- AND I BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE CASE AT PRESENT-- THE CHANCELLOR HAS SHOWN A CAPACITY TO PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER JUST WHEN THINGS SEEM TO BE FALLING APART AND TO FIND ENOUGH ENERGY FOR A FURTHER SUSTAINED EFFORT UNDER CONDITIONS OF RELATIVE TEMPERANCE. THE ALL- NIGHT WORKING HABITS OF THE BERLIN CITY HALL DURING THE CRISIS YEARS WHEN HE WAS GOVERNING MAYOR WERE A POOR PREPARATION FOR RUNNING A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF ORDERLY PERSONAL AND BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSES. BRANDT IS DEFINITELY NOT A MORNING PERSON, AS MANY CHAGRINED INTERLOCUTORS HAVE LEARNED TO THEIR SORROW WHEN CONFRONTED BEFORE NOON MERELY WITH A FEW GRUNTS AND LONG EMBARRASSING SILENCES.

4. THERE IS A STREAK OF PESSIMISM IN BRANDT ABOUT THE ULTIMATE RELIABILITY OF THE US WHICH HE SOMETIMES CONFIDES TO HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATES. WHETHER OR NOT THIS DATES BACK ESSENTIALLY TO THE TRUAMA OF THE BERLIN WALL, WHEN HE THOUGHTWE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN MORE DECISIVE ACTION, OR TO A MORE COMPLICATED SERIES OF CAUSES, IT IS A DEFINITE FACTOR IN HIS MENTAL MAKEUP. IN THIS CONTEXT, CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS EASTERN POLICY CAN BE CONSIDERED AS IN PART AN

ELABORATE HEDGE AGAINST THE CONTINGENCY OF AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL FROM EUROPE. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE IS ENOUGH OF A REALIST TO KNOW THAT, AS A GERMAN PATRIOT AND LEADER OF HIS COUNTRY, HE MUST DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO PREVENT THAT WHICH HE FEARS. THIS, IN PRACTICE, MEANS PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN TRYING TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE VARIOUS ISSUES WHICH HAVE ARISEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, BETWEEN THE US AND THE COMMON MARKET. IT ALSO MEANS GIVING LOYAL SUPPORT TO US POLICIES, OR AT LEAST REFRAINING FROM CRITICISM OF THEM DESPITE HEAVY PRESSURES FROM THE LEFT WING OF HIS OWN PARTY. IT MEANS DOING EVERYTHING HE CAN, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND OTHERWISE, TO ENSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF AMERICAN CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE. FINALLY, IT MEANS ACTING TO REASSURE THE US, AS HE HAS JUST DONE AT THE SPD NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTION IN HANNOVER, THAT HE WILL BROOK NO OVERT EXPRESSIONS OF ANTI- AMERICAN SENTIMENT IN HIS PARTY.

5. AN INTRIGUING QUESTION IS THE EXTENT OF INFLUENCE OVER BRANDT' S FOREIGN POLICY THINKING EXERCISED BY MINISTER- WITHOUT- PORTFOLIO EGON BAHR, ONE OF BRANDT' S ASSOCIATES FROM THE EARLY BERLIN DAYS, WHO IS TO A LARGE EXTENT THE CONCEPTUAL FATHER OF GERMAN EASTERN POLICY. WHETHER OR NOT HE SHARES ALL OF BAHR' S VIEWS, THE CHANCELLOR HAS A CERTAIN AFFECTION FOR HIS FREE- WHEELING AND FREE- THINKING ADVISER, WHO IS VIEWED BY MANY POLITICIANS IN BONN AS SOMETHING OF AN EMINENCE GRISE. AFTER BAHR' S MISERABLE DEBUT AS A PARLIAMENT-ARIAN, WHEN SOME WANTED TO CUT OFF HIS ADVISER' S HEAD, THE CHANCELLOR WRAPPED HIS PROTECTIVE MANTLE AROUND HIS OLD ASSOCIATE. HE MAY HAVE TO DO SO AGAIN SOON, SINCE THE OPPOSITION HAS BEGUN TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON BAHR' S VIEWS PRINTED IN THE MOST RECENT ORBIS WHICH SUGGEST, INTER ALIA, THE DISMANTLING OF THE PRESENT ALLIANCE SYSTEMS IN EAST AND WEST (BONN 5129). BAHR, INCIDENTALLY, IS AWAY FROM BONN AT THIS POINT ON A CURE IN CONNECTION WITH A GENUINE ILLNESS.

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ACTION SS-14

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R 171345 Z APR 73
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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BONN 5612

LIMDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

6. ONE THING IS CLEAR ABOUT THE BRANDT- BAHR RELATIONSHIP: THEY ARE BOTH CONVINCED GERMAN NATIONALISTS, IN THE SENSE THAT THEY TEND TO VIEW PROBLEMS (UNLIKE MANY OF THE FRG'S POSTWAR LEADERS) IN TERMS OF MORE NARROWLY- FOCUSED GERMAN INTERESTS THAN WAS THE CASE IN THE PAST. THIS IS TO BE SEEN PARTICULARLY IN THE STRATEGY UNDERLYING THE OSTPOLITIK: IT HAS BEEN AIMED PRIMARILY AT CREATING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MIGHT ENABLE THE TWO PARTS OF GERMANY TO GROW CLOSER, HOPEFULLY (ON BRANDT' S PART) CULMINATING IN SOME FORM OF REUNIFICATION OR CONFEDERATION AT SOME DISTANT POINT. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE, THERE IS OFTEN CONCERN ON THE PART OF MOSRE SKEPTICAL OBSERVERS THAT BRANDT MIGHT BE PREPARED TO MAKE DEALS WITH SOVIETS (E. G. IN THE CSCE CONTEXT) FOR GERMAN GAIN BUT AT ALLIANCE EXPENSE. THERE MAY BE SOME GROUNDS FOR SUCH CONCERNS BUT WE BELIEVE BRANDT' S ROOM FOR MANEUVER IN THIS AREA OF ACTIVITY IS EXTREMELY LIMITED.

7. AS A PRACTICING POLITICIAN, BRANDT IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE LEADERS TO APPEAR ON THE POST-WORLD WAR II GERMAN SCENE. WITHOUT HIM, IT IS DOUBTFUL
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THAT THE SPD WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THE INROADS WHICH IT HAS INTO THE MIDDLE- CLASS GERMAN VOTE AND THUS ACHIEVE THE POSITION OF THE LARGEST SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY IN THE COUNTRY. HIS OWN PERSONAL HISTORY OF OPPOSITION TO NAZISM HAS ALSO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO LEAD THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OUT OF ITS GUILT- RIDDEN PAST AND TO MAKE THE FRG A MORE FULLY ACCEPTED AND RESPECTED MEMBER OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY. HE IS PROUD OF THIS ACHIEVEMENT AND OF THE WORLD' S RECOGNITION OF

IT BY HIS BEING AWARDED THE NOBEL PEACE PROZE IN 1972.
THE ASSUMPTION OF THIS NEW ROLE FOR GERMANY ALSO PLAYS
A MAJOR PART IN THE WAY BRANDT NOW LOOKS AT THE WORLD.
HE NOW SEES HIMSELF AS THE LEADER OF A COUNTRY WHICH IS
MORE INDEPENDENT AND MORE AWARE OF ITS OWN POWER THAN AT
ANY TIME SINCE 1945.

8. BRANDT' S ROLE AS A EUROPEAN STATESMAN IS ALSO
IMPORTANT TO HIM-- BOTH AS AN ESSENTIAL COUNTER- BALANCE
TO AN ACTIVE EASTERN POLICY AND AS THE MOST VISIBLE
EVIDENCE THAT HE HAS HELPED RESTORE THE FRG TO A
POSITION OF RESPECT IN WESTERN EUROPE. HE IS PARTIC-
ULARLY PROUD OF HIS PART IN THE HAGUE AND PARIS SUMMIT
MEETINGS. THIS ROLE WILL SOMETIMES MODULATE HIS PO-
SITIONS, PARTICULARLY ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, WHERE THE
FRG' S BASIC VIEWS ARE OFTEN QUITE CLOSE TO OURS.

9. AS AN ORATOR, BRANDT CAN BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE, AL-
THOUGH ON BAD DAYS HE MAY SEEM STRIDENT AND EASILY
KNOCKED OFF BALANCE BY HECKLERS WITHIN THE BUNDESTAG OR
AN AUDIENCE. HE HAS ACQUIRED SUFFICIENT ADDITIONAL
POUNDAGE IN RECENT YEARS TO GIVE HIM THAT DELIBERATENESS
AND MAJESTY OF BEARING, SOMETIMES BORDERING ON THE
POMPOUS, WHICH SEEMS TO APPEAL TO THOSE MANY GERMANS
STILL SEEMINGLY IN NEED OF A TRADITIONAL FATHER FIGURE.

10. AS INDICATED, BRANDT IS NO LONGER A DOCTRINAIRE
SOCIALIST; HE HAS MOVED A LONG WAY FROM THE MARXIST
IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRICTIONS OF HIS YOUTH. HE DOES NOT
CONVEY THE IMPRESSION OF A REFORMER DRIVEN BY AN URGE
TO MODIFY THE FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES OF
GERMAN SOCIETY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS NOT ENTIRELY
CLEAR THAT HE HAS A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT MAKES
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THAT SOCIETY FUNCTION AS IT DOES. ESSENTIALLY A POLI-
TICAL ANIMAL, HE FREQUENTLY SEEMS BORED WITH THOSE
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH, NOW THAT EASTERN POLICY HAS
MOVED AWAY FROM ITS MOST ACTIVE PHASE, MUST NECESSARILY
OCCUPY A GOOD PORTION OF HIS ATTENTION.

11. THIS THEN IS CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT, AT 59 STILL
VERY MUCH ON TOP OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE. THE
RUMORS OF SERIOUS ILLNESS WHICH WERE GOING AROUND SOME
MONTHS AGO DO NOT SEEM TO BE BORNE OUT BY HIS PRESENT
BEARING AND ATTITUDE. WE SHALL, IN SEPARATE TELEGRAMS,
BE OUTLINING SOME OF THE MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE PREOCCUPA-
TIONS WHICH HE WILL BRING WITH HIM, BUT GIVEN THE
PERSONALITY TRAITS WE HAVE NOTED, HIS APPROACH TO SUCH

PROBLEMS WILL ALWAYS BE STRONGLY INDIVIDUAL, AND THE
KINDS OF ARGUMENTS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO APPEAL TO HIM
ARE THOSE WHICH FALL WITHIN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
WHICH HE HAS DEVELOPED FOR THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE
AND OF THE ONE WHICH HE WOULD IDEALLY LIKE TO SEE.
HILLENBRAND

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